

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New Harris County Initiative Aims to Assist Vulnerable Groups Through Integrated, “No-Wrong-Door” Service Care Approach

HCPH to Roll Out ACCESS Harris County to Help Groups with Multiple Needs Gain Self-sufficiency and Improve Their Well-being

HOUSTON – Following more than a year of program building, Harris County Public Health (HCPH) is launching a new initiative to improve the lives of individuals experiencing hardship by providing an integrated, “no-wrong-door” service care approach across different local agencies.

ACCESS (Accessing Coordinated Care and Empowering Self-Sufficiency) Harris County will provide coordinated care services to targeted groups in the County that have been identified by HCPH and its partner agencies as having critical needs. The populations that ACCESS Harris will initially target include:

- Youth and adults in neighborhoods served by HCPH’s Community Violence Interruption Program (CVIP) – specifically, the Cypress Station, Sunnyside, South Park, Greater OST and South Union communities in Houston – and the Holistic Assistance Response Team (HART) participants in Harris County Sheriff’s Office (HCSO) Districts 1 and 4.
- Individuals who are homeless or insecurely housed with mental or physical health conditions
- Black mothers identified by HCPH’s new Black Maternal Health program who are at risk of health problems due to inadequate pregnancy-related care
- Adults exiting the justice system and entering society
- Hispanic residents with severe chronic diseases
- Youth or young adults soon aging out of the foster care system

In 2021, the Harris County Commissioners Court approved \$14.2 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) federal funding to help launch ACCESS Harris County.

“ACCESS Harris County provides a holistic approach to offering support to individuals facing extreme hardship that is not exclusive to one life event but includes other challenges,” HCPH Executive Director Barbie Robinson said. “We are pleased to work together with partner agencies and organizations to support these individuals and their families with the care and resources they need and to get them on the path to recovery and self-sufficiency.”

HCPH serves as the lead agency of ACCESS Harris County and will work closely with multiple departments and organizations (also known as safety net agencies) to provide a vast array of coordinated care services to vulnerable residents. These organizations include, but are not limited to:

- Harris County Community Supervision and Corrections Department
- Department of Economics, Equity, and Opportunity
- Harris Center for Mental Health and IDD
- Harris County Community Services Department
- Harris County Department of Education

- more-

HCPH is the local public health agency for the Harris County, Texas jurisdiction. It provides a wide variety of public health activities and services aimed at improving the health and well-being of the Harris County community.

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- Harris County Housing Authority
- Harris County Juvenile Program Department
- Harris County District Attorney's Office
- Harris County Libraries
- Harris County Resources for Children and Adults
- Harris County Sheriff's Office
- Harris Health System
- Texas Department of Criminal Justice Parole Division Region III/Area Agency on Parole
- The Children's Assessment Center
- Veterans Evaluation Services
- State and local child support services

A care-coordination team is assigned to all ACCESS Harris County participants. The team helps each participant find necessary services that improve their overall well-being. Over time, the goal is for participants to become self-sufficient and reach long-term stability.

Care coordination has been included in new programs offered by HCPH assisting vulnerable populations. The new programs include the Holistic Assistance Response Team (HART), CVIP, and Maternal Child Health Program (MCHP). The linkages created will give participants the care and support needed to address factors creating poor health outcomes (also known as social determinants of health.)

“We give ACCESS participants every possible avenue to receive proper health care, education, housing, employment, justice services, and other types of assistance to help them recover from their hardships,” said ACCESS Harris County Director Jamie Hughes. “ACCESS gives people the lift they need from start to finish without isolating one service from another. It's all a close-knit, concerted care approach made possible through all our partner agencies.”

For more information about ACCESS Harris County, visit hcphtx.org/ACCESS.

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